

Thursday, February 24, 1966

Life's Many Sides

Blackmarket goes international

By TON THAT THIEN

If you have read the SDN, February 18, you probably have noticed the following items on page 6, column 1:

- 1) Vietnamese economic activities to be reported on TV.
- 2) VN blackmarket goes international.

The first item said: "The Economy Department, for which this part of the telecast program is reserved, intends to use it to provide advertisements on industrial operation and production".

"Jolly good", I said to myself. We shall know where to get all the goods we need. It only remains to know also where to get the money to buy them! But my wife would then remind me, I imagine, that we shall need plenty of money, in particular, to buy cement to build a house (now that we have been told to clear out from the one in which we have been living), for cement costs something like 400 piasters a bag instead of 93.

Concerning the second item, I could not refrain from thinking how funny life really is. I guess the GIs will feel the same way too. Here is this little Vietnam, fighting for its survival and for the freedom of the Free World, importing American soldiers (the cost of such imports is covered by the American government), but exporting blackmarket. The new country which has been added to our list is the Republic of Korea. Do not tell me that Vietnam is a country in need of technical aid, know-how and all that sort of stuff!

A home and a car for everyone?

General Ky is reported to have told the anti-fraud youths last week that in two years' time there would be no more poor people in Vietnam, and every Vietnamese will at least have a house, the kids will have milk for suckling, and injustice will be eliminated.

Wow! I said to myself! In two years' time our housing problem will be solved; we shall no longer hear stories of mothers running left and right trying to get milk for their kids at 30 piasters a tin, sugar at 40 piasters a kilo and so forth. And perhaps each of us will have a car too.